

History of Military Ridge

Native Americans, Explorers, and Trails

Before Europeans arrived, most of the Military Ridge area was prairie oak openings (savanna), with scattered tracts of heavy timber. The oak openings contained burr oaks, black oaks, and white oaks, but were mostly dominated by grasses and forbs. Cedars grew on the steep slopes. American bison, who favored the trails with the least grade, once lumbered across the ridge, along with panthers, bears, elk, and wolves. Billions of passenger pigeons (extinct since 1900) darkened the skies during their annual migration.

The first people in the area were the Iowa tribe, for whom the county was named. They were followed, at one time or another, by the Illinois, Fox, Winnebago (Ho Chunk), and Sauk. Early peoples mined the lead in the region for use in weights, beads, ornaments, and animal effigies.

French explorers were the first European people to come to the area. France claimed the area from 1665 to 1760. In 1786, Jonathan Carver explored the Wisconsin River. He wrote in his journal: "I ascended one of the highest of these [the blue Mounds] and had an extensive view of the country. I saw large quantities of [lead] lying about the streets in the towns belonging to the Saukies, and it seemed to be as good as other produce of other countries." The Native Americans mines were crude, but their smelting process more complex.

Miners and the Military Road

The U.S. Army, needing lead for shot, controlled the mining lands. The Army had leased mineral lands from Native Americans and, beginning in 1822, leased lots to anyone who would agree to be taxed and to sell only to licensed smelters. It was against the law to farm any land that evidenced lead.

Lead mining brought the first heavy influx of settlers. Lead was widely used for weights, windows, bullets, pipes, type metal, pewter utensils, and paint.

The mining area included Dodgeville and Blue Mounds. The first mines looked more like potholes than what we see now. Most of the lead was hauled in wagons to the Mississippi River, where it was shipped in flat boats to St. Louis and the Gulf of Mexico. Some was hauled along a crude, meandering trail in huge wagons drawn by eight to ten yoke of oxen, to Milwaukee, where it was shipped east via the Great Lakes. Some was taken to Helena Shot Tower (now Tower Hill State Park, between Spring Green and Arena), where it was made into ammunition pellets.

A depression hit in 1828. In the winter of 1827-28, a barrel of salt pork cost ten tons of ore. Early in 1830, many miners turned to farming. By an 1829 treaty, the Winnebago ceded one-fourth of their land in Wisconsin, including land in Iowa County, to the United States government.

Judge James Duane Doty, later a territorial governor, made annual trips from Green Bay to Prairies du Chien during the 1820s. He grew tired of the canoe trips, so in May 1829, he struck out by horseback from Green Bay to Prairies du Chien with lawyers Henry S. Baird and Morgan L. Martin and a Menominee guide. The trip followed well-trod Native American trails

and convinced Doty that an overland route was possible. He helped Green Bay pioneers draw up a petition to the federal government.

In support, Samuel Stambaugh, Native American agent at Green Bay, wrote that “at the close of the last war, the Indians had marched from a place called Pine-bends, 30 miles beyond Mineral Point, to Garlic Island in Winnebago Lake, about 20 miles below the Fond du Lac river, in two days.”

At first, the federal government was not receptive. The government had moved the Oneidas from New York state to Wisconsin, and wanted Wisconsin’s interior to remain a Native American preserve. Also, the treasury was exhausted, and the administration opposed the general internal improvements except for military purposes.

An accumulation of infringements on Native American rights led to the Blackhawk War, from April to September of 1832. The war awakened federal authorities to the advantages of a road across Wisconsin. Soldiers with farm background saw good land in the state and wanted to homestead.

Father Samuel Mazzuchelli and Judge Doty made an eight-day trip by horseback from Green Bay to Prairies du Chien in September 1832. Mazzuchelli, an Italian, was the only priest west of Lake Michigan. His parish extended to Iowa, Minnesota, and northern Illinois. He later founded the Sinsinawa Dominican order.

In 1832, Congress appropriated \$5,000 to lay out and open a military road to link Fort Howard (Green Bay), Fort Winnebago (Portage), and Fort Crawford (Prairies du Chien). The western section of the road passed mainly on the ridge, a strategic route because the views to the north and south gave military control of southwest Wisconsin. It connected with roads to Galena, Illinois, which had been opened by the lead miners. Doty and Lt. Alexander Center of the 5th Infantry surveyed for the road in 1833-34. The Military Road was built from Fort Crawford by troops under Col. Zachary Taylor, while troops from Fort Howard built the northeastern end, and those from Fort Winnebago the center section.

Companies averaging 40 men each were assigned in rotation to prepare stretches of about 15 miles apiece. Each company camped out on the job, moving on as work progressed. Each probably spent about four to six weeks in the field. The work served as training for the troops in camping, cooking, and marching. They kept combat vigilant, even though Native Americans were never a problem.

The troops cleared brush two rods wide, plowed two furrows to mark the 30-foot roadway, and put crosswise logs, called corduroy, over marshy areas. Small trees were cut off close to the ground, and larger stumps were left one foot high. Rough bridges were built over some streams while other streams just had their banks cut so travelers could splash through. This endangered the teamsters with oxen-drawn wagons in the spring. Without drainage, the road was impassable in rainy weather, rutted, and dusty in the summer. It sometimes was “as slippery as noodles on a spoon.”

On December 8, 1835, the President relayed to Congress the Quartermaster General’s report that the western section of the road had been completed on August 1. It was feared troops

would not be able to finish the eastern section, which had more woods and swamps, by the end of the year.

On December 19, 1836, the Wisconsin territory asked Congress to improve the Military Road and extend it to Milwaukee. "It is still in unfinished condition, and not to be traveled over either by wagon or carriage without very great inconvenience," the petition read. The petition argued that a road between the lead region and Milwaukee could save 30 to 40 percent in time and 25 percent in the cost of transporting lead. On July 7, 1838, Congress voted to spend \$10,000 for a road from Milwaukee to Dubuque via Madison and \$5,000 to complete the Green Bay to Prairies du Chien road.

In 1839, Capt. Thomas Jefferson Cram of the U.S. Army asked for more funds. "Between Madison and the Mississippi, nature has done so much towards providing a good road that an expenditure of about \$10,000 in bridging the streams, ditching, and grading would be sufficient," he wrote. Despite Cram's request, no more appropriations were made until 1845. In the late 1830s and 1840s, the Wisconsin territory built many roads linking Madison and other points on the Military Road with other communities.

The Blackhawk War had briefly interrupted the lead mining region's prosperity. Production regained a high level soon after the war, and another influx of miners came, this time from Cornwall, England. The Cornish dug the first underground mines. By 1840, Wisconsin produced more than half of America's lead, and the Wisconsin-Illinois-Iowa lead region produced 85 percent of the world's lead. The road attracted settlers who, out of necessity, helped to maintain it. In 1836, the first census showed that almost half the Wisconsin territory's 11,583 white residents lived in Iowa County, the lead mining district. The lead boom peaked in 1845-47 and declined rapidly after 1850. Lead production spurted briefly and zinc production began in 1860. Zinc production peaked in 1918, with a secondary spurt in 1926-27.

Farmers and the Railroad

Farming became more important in the area in the 1830s and 1840s. A two-horse stage line was put into operation between Mineral Point and Madison in 1838. The stage stopped in Blue Mounds so passengers and horses could eat and drink. The government legalized the sale of land in the region in 1847. From 1870 to 1900, the emphasis in Wisconsin was on building railroads rather than roads.

Officials of the Chicago and Tomah Railroad were the first to consider a railroad along the Military Ridge. In 1876, they proposed a narrow-gauge line, which would cost less to build and operate than standard gauge. The railroad expected landowners along its route to donate land for the tracks and depots and to help pay the cost of the line. But when farmers along the route refused to cooperate, the project was dropped.

The Chicago and Tomah line, which was bought out by the Chicago and North Western Railroad, operated a narrow-gauge line in southwestern Wisconsin. In 1880, plans were made to link that line (which extended to Montfort Junction) with Madison, by means of a 60.84-mile standard gauge line.

The railroad asked communities along the line to invest varying amounts in the railroad in exchange for promises to build and maintain depots there. The proposition carried with a boom and work began in July, 1880. Construction brought busy times to communities along the line. West Blue Mounds streets were crowded with new arrivals, the most conspicuous being “110 mules which have been entertaining the crowds with free music of the most melodious character.”

The 9.45 miles from Madison to Verona were completed by the end of the year. Completion proceeded westward during 1881. The first train, with its small wood-burning engine and oversized smokestack, traveled the line in the fall of 1881. Chicago and North Western directors were among the first passengers. Following the Military Ridge, the line was said to include the longest stretch of track in Wisconsin without bridges.

The October 1882 schedule showed a passenger train daily except Sundays leaving Montfort (with connections from Galena and Fennimore) at 10:05 a.m. and arriving in Madison at 1:05 p.m. and Milwaukee at 4:30, and one in the opposite direction leaving Milwaukee at 11:25 a.m. and Madison at 2:40 p.m., arriving in Montfort at 5:45 p.m. There were also one freight and one mixed train each way daily except Sunday.

President McKinley made a whistle-stop tour along the line on October 6, 1899. Crowds numbered 1,000 in Dodgeville, 500 in Barneveld, and 2,000 to 3,000 in Mount Horeb. For many years, there were two passenger trains and two or more freight trains each way daily. The “Cannonball,” a freight train pulling one passenger coach, left early in the morning from Lancaster and returned late at night from Madison.

Tourists and Highways

Meanwhile, the 20th century brought renewed interest in roads. Between 1911 and 1917, unofficial promotional organizations marked routes for travel. One of the first routes was from Milwaukee via the Military Ridge to LaCrosse. Promoters were most interested in collecting subscriptions from cities and villages along the routes.

This was carried to such an extreme that the State Highway Commission asked the Legislature to prohibit laying out or marking any route without the Commission’s approval. In 1918, the State Highway Commission laid out the now familiar system of numbered state trunk highways. The road from Milwaukee to Prairie du Chien by way of Madison, Verona, and Dodgeville was Highway 18. When the federal highway aid system was set up in Wisconsin in the 1920s, the Madison-Prairie du Chen highway was included as a primary highway.

In 1933, a 100-foot right-of-way was purchased for Highway 18 between Dodgeville and Ridgeway using federal funds. The highway was planned with a 20-foot strip of concrete, plus 10 feet surfaced on each side. This stretch was selected because the old road was badly worn and dusty, while that between Ridgeway and Blue Mounds had been given a light tar treatment.

As highways were improved, use of the railroad declined. In the 1940s, there was one passenger train each way daily except Sunday. It left Madison for Lancaster in early morning and returned in the afternoon. Freight trains included two to six extras a week carrying sand

and gravel and livestock every Sunday. Early trains were all steam powered. During the late 1940s, the railroad also used a “hootenanny,” a rail motor car that carried passengers and express.

In January 1950, the Chicago and North Western asked permission to discontinue passenger service on the line, saying that the train cost almost twice as much to run as it received in revenues. Only 6,700 passengers a year rode the train. “The fact remains that habits of riding have changed during the years and where rail passenger service, in some instances, was once a vital necessity to a community, it has now become an alternate or emergency mode of travel for short distances,” the Public Service Commission concluded on November 29, 1950. The commission allowed the railroad to drop its passenger train between Madison and Lancaster on the condition that it continue to take passengers and express on its freight train.

The last passenger train traveled this way December 30, 1950. After that, a coach was added to the freight train for the few passengers and express, and mail was carried by highway routes. Bus companies served the same route. The freight train took nearly 12 hours to go the 85.7 miles from Lancaster to Madison, so it is not surprising that only about two passengers a month rode it. On July 1, 1954, the Public Service Commission allowed the railroad to discontinue the passenger service. The railroad converted from steam to diesel freight engines on the line in about 1956.

The New Trail

The Chicago and North Western first petitioned for abandonment of the “Ridge Runner” line west of Mount Horeb in May of 1971. The condition of the line deteriorated so that in 1976 the speed limit was 10 to 15 miles per hour. Other railroad lines had been abandoned in Wisconsin, and some had been converted to recreational trails, beginning with the Eloy-Sparta Trail. Wisconsin was a pioneer in the reuse of abandoned trail lines. In March 1976, the Department of Natural Resources established completed a feasibility study for a trail along the line between Klevenville and Dodgeville.

On December 1, 1979, after a hard-fought legal struggle, the Interstate Commerce Commission approved the railroad’s petition to abandon the line west of mount Horeb. After negotiations with the railroad, the Department of Natural Resources established the 23.5-mile Military Ridge State Park Trail between Mount Horeb and Dodgeville on May 29, 1981.

In May 1982, the Chicago and the North Western announced plans to abandon the 16.1 miles between Fitchburg and Mount Horeb. There was little public protest to this abandonment, since only 161 cars of freight moved over the line in all of 1981. The abandonment was approved, effective August 20, 1982. The Natural Resources Board approved the purchase on January 25, 1983, and the trail master plan, allowing for bicycling, hiking, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing, was approved on August 24, 1983.

Crews immediately got to work. They cut brush over the entire length of the trail, fenced about 10 miles to keep cattle out, planked and railed the 48 trestles, surfaced the trail, built signs, and paved parking lots at Verona and Dodgeville. This was one of the first three projects of the

Wisconsin Conservation Corps (WCC), established in 1983. The dedication of the completed portions of the trail was held May 19, 1985, in Barneveld.

1. East End of the Trail – Verona Park N Ride

At Highways Businesses 18/151 and PB is a 100-car parking lot. A spring—fed pond is also on the site. The Department of Natural Resources is leasing this land from Dane County, which used it as part of the County Farm for many years. The Department of Natural Resources plans to extend the trail toward Madison, where it will join with the proposed Capital City Trail and eventually link with trails leading to Milwaukee.

The Ice-Age Trail, a 1,000-mile footpath along the glacial margin in Wisconsin, crosses the Military Ridge Trail here. The Ice Age Trail winds from Door County through the Kettle Moraine State Forests to near the Illinois Border, then northward by way of Verona and Devil's Lake to north central Wisconsin, and westward to the Minnesota border at Interstate Park.

2. Badger Prairie Health Care Center

Across Highway 18/151 from the trail end was Dane County's Badger Prairie Health Care Center, was a 142-bed nursing home. It grew out of the "Dane County Poor House," opened here on 160 acres of land in 1854. The center started as a double log house with a small frame addition, with other buildings and additions added over time. Until 1883, the "Insane Asylum" and "Poor House" were in a brick building south of Highway 18/151, in a grove of trees which still stands around the trail parking lot. In 1883, an insane asylum was built. It is also reported that a small group of lepers were cared for in a separate facility across from the main building. By 1906, the farm had expanded to 640 acres. Home West cared by the ill, infirmed, and aged. The county closed Home West in 1988 and the building has been torn down. Home East provides long-term psychiatric care and treatment for the chronically mentally ill, developmentally disabled, and those with dementia who cannot function in the community. An Alzheimer Center opened here in 1985. Adjacent to this facility is the entrance to Badger Prairie Park.

3. Verona's Community Park

The City of Verona has developed a park along the trail at the eastern edge of the city. In addition to the Eagle's Nest Ice Arena that hosts hockey, the park has softball, baseball, and soccer fields, concessions, and parking for cars and bikes.

The Town of Verona was first Surveyed in 1883. Field notes said surveyors found prairies and savanna with burr, white, and yellow (black) oak, with some hickory; "the timber is low and not valuable."

4. City of Verona

The City of Verona (population 12,969, elevation 983 feet above sea level) grew out of two communities settled in the 1840s. The first, Taylorville, was near a grist mill built in 1843-44 along Badger Mill Creek. The Corners, a mile to the north, was the crossing of two main roads. Verona's population was mainly German and Scottish.

Josiah Matts sold a 100-foot strip of land through Verona to the Chicago and Tomah Railcoach Co. in 1880 for \$50. The railroad depot was in the block west of Main Street. Two hotels were nearby. One of the hotels, the Eagle's Nest, was a stagecoach stop for the Milwaukee to

Mineral Point and Green Bay to Galena routes. It was built in 1850 and included a carriage barn for the horses and stagecoaches.

Badger Prairie County Park

Badger Prairie County Park is .7 mile north on highway M and then .5 mile east on Cross Country Road. The park has a picnic area, shelter, playground areas, and softball fields. It consists of 300 acres with areas for group camping, mountain bike trails, cross-country skiing, and ice skating.

5. Terminal Moraine

About .7 mile west of Main Street in Verona is the outer margin of the Johnstown Moraine, which is debris left by a glacier which came just this far some 12,000 years ago. The ice was more than a mile thick in places. The moraine crosses an ancient valley at Verona where Badger Mill Creek cuts through. The glacier occupied the valley north of the trail and left its moraine crowded against the western slope. A narrow ravine between the glacier and the slope was probably kept open by glacial waters running southward.

West of the moraine is the driftless area, missed by the glacier. Nineteenth-century explorers and geologists noticed that this area lacked the loose boulders found in other parts of the state. The glaciated area also contains more wetlands and lakes, while the driftless region is marked by deep-cut valleys.

6. Sugar River Valley

West of Verona the trail enters the valley of the Sugar River. Its water flows to the Pecatonica River, the Rock River, the Mississippi River, and the Gulf of Mexico. Some 20,000 years ago this wide valley was the bed of a large lake along the melting glacier. This lake filled the valleys with sand and gravel more than 100 feet deep. The lake's waves steepened the sides of the valley.



Great horned owl

Before European settlers came, the valley was covered by treeless low prairie and sedge meadow. Great horned owls, woodcock, snipe, pheasants, mourning doves, cardinals, blackbirds, crows, killdeer, red-winged blackbirds, bobolinks, marsh hawks, and other birds and wildlife live in the Sugar River Valley.

7. Prairie

Just west of the bend where the trail enters the wide valley is a high-quality prairie remnant stretching about 200 yards along the trail, especially on the south side. Wisconsin was the northeast border of the prairies which once extended from Indiana to the Rocky Mountains and from Canada to Texas. A prairie is a plant community dominated by grasses rather than trees. It also includes many non-grassy herbs, called forbs. Prairie plants have large root systems, two to three times the height of their tops, to store food underground. They can withstand extremes of climate and the fires that often swept the prairies. Fires kept trees and other non-prairie plants out of the prairie. Prairie sod was too tough for wood plows, so general settlement of the prairies depended on the steel plow.

Now, most of the prairies have disappeared. Those that remain are mostly too wet, too dry, or too steep to plow. Intermediate prairies (mesic prairies), with deep, rich, black soil and gentle topography, have almost totally disappeared. Many of the remnants that remain, like this one, were preserved by the railroads' practice of burning brush away from their tracks.

The prairie remnant is mesic at the east end and wet at the west end. Wet prairies have peat-like soils with high water-holding capacity. Mesic prairies warm more slowly in spring than dry prairies, so there are fewer early spring flowers. Moist prairies often have late springs and early fall frosts, but the prairie plants are resistant to frost damage. The valleys in which moist prairies are found accumulate cold air, so a dense blanket of fog is likely to form in the morning. Even after the sun clears the fog, the air remains humid.

Look for a rich variety of color through the summer. Some of the flowers found here include:

Early Summer

- May and June, look for the blossoms of prairie parsley, an endangered species in Wisconsin. Although this plant was common in the state, the almost total destruction of its community has drastically reduced its numbers.
- Late spring, early summer, look for the pinkish-purple and white blossoms of downy phlox. It has stiff, narrow leaves opposite one another on a slender, hairy stem.
- Around Mother's Day, look for the flowers of the large white wild indigo in clusters up to a foot long. The plant, a member of the pea family, grows 2 to 4 tall and has dropping pods.
- In June and July, look for the dense, 2-inch spikes of violet and gray lead plant flowers. The lead plant has numerous leaves that are .25-inch long and opposite one another on many small branches.



Midsummer

- Look for the rattlesnake master blossoms with ball-shaped whitish heads. The plant, 2 to 6 feet tall, has a cluster of long, stiff bristle-edged leaves at its base.
- Also in midsummer, look for the snowy blooms of yellow coneflower, which grows 1.5 to 5 feet tall, and the northern red lily.
- Beginning in July, look for the rose-purple blossoms of prairie blazing-stars. The flowers at the top of the stalk bloom first and those at the base last.
- Look for the yellow flowers of rosinweed, named for its resinous sap. It is 3 to five feet tall and has rough, paired leaves attached directly to the stem.
- In addition, look for the compass plant, 3 to 9 feet tall, a relative of rosinweed. Its leaves, deeply lobed, are covered with short hairs and grow in clumps from ground level.

Late Summer/Fall

- Look for the stiff goldenrod and smooth aster.

An early traveler called rosinweed and compass plant “prairie sunflowers,” though their flowers are much smaller than a sunflower. “But the strange peculiarity of the plant is that its leaves invariably point north and south,” the traveler wrote. The Native Americans could, in absence of trees on the vast prairie, always find a guide in the leaves of the prairie sunflower. Its resinous qualities might also have rendered it a good substitute for pine knots in giving light. The wild indigo always accompanies this plant.

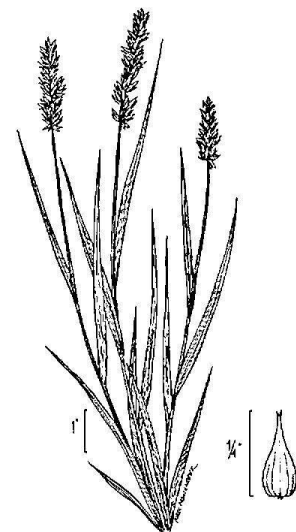
Grasses such as needle grass (2 to 4 feet tall), big bluestem (3 to 8 feet tall), and Indian grass (4 to 6 feet tall) grow in clumps in the prairie. Mesic and wet prairies contain ants that build mounds 1 to 1.5 feet high and 2 to 3 feet in diameter. Moles, skunks, and badgers also burrow in the soil. Together these animals gradually and completely turn over the soil down to six feet once every 100 years. This, along with the extensive and deep roots of prairie plants, made this some of the richest soil in the world.

8. Fen and Sedge Meadow

South of the trail is a very high-quality complex of fen, wet prairies, and sedge meadow. It is gradually being taken over by aspen and shrubs. A fen is a special kind of wet prairie environment with wet, spring alkaline soil and an internally flowing supply of calcium-rich water. This is one of the few fens in unglaciated terrain. A sedge meadow is an open community of wet peat soils, more than half dominated by sedges rather than grasses. Sedges look somewhat like grasses, but “sedges have edges” –most of their stems are three-sided. Their leaves have motor cells which enable them to fold during temporary dry spells. They grow in clumps, also known as tussocks or hummocks. More than a dozen kinds of sedges grow here.

The sedge meadow may be flooded in the spring or after heavy rains, but typically is just above the water table. The air in a sedge meadow is cooler and moister than the surrounding area, with a shorter growing season and few spring flowers. Among the 120 kinds of plants found in this area are:

- White and yellow ladyslippers, members of the orchid family. The white ladyslipper is an endangered species in Wisconsin and threatened in the United States. This plant is decreasing in number due to habitat drainage, plowing, and grazing.
- Cuckoo flower, which usually blooms the last week in May.
- Bog birch, a shrub.
- Hoary puccoon, a long-lived plant with a root system more than ten feet deep and a downy top 8 to 10 inches tall. It has golden yellow flowers from mid-May to early June.
- Marsh marigold.
- Blue flag, a wild iris.
- Joe Pye weed, very showy in midsummer.
- Goldenrods and asters in the fall.



9. Sugar River

The Sugar River was the designated boundary in 1829 between Native American lands to the west and U.S. government lands to the east. Remaining Native American rights were ceded in a treaty signed at Rock Island, Illinois, in 1832. When he surveyed the area in 1833, Loren Miller reported, "The water is of the best quality." The river has a sand and gravel bottom and was fed by many springs and seeps. At the time, the river supported native brook trout. With the decline water quality, they and many other animals have disappeared.

Today this part of the Sugar River has brown and rainbow trout, native smallmouth bass, various minnows and darters, white suckers, black bullheads, and occasional other game and panfish. Marsh marigolds brighten its floodplain in late April. You may see deer tracks on the trail. In recent years beaver have reestablished themselves. Signs of their work can be seen along the trail.

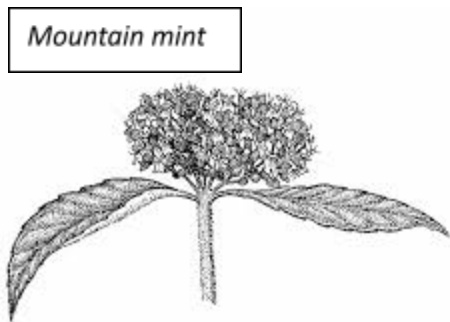
10. Springs

There is a group of springs west of the intersection of the trail and White Crossing Road. Because groundwater bubbles up constantly, the springs do not freeze and watercress grows here throughout the year, even when there is snow all around. Springs are formed when groundwater moves through cracks, pores, or channels in the rock, from places where the water levels are higher to places where the water levels are lower. How fast the springs flow depends on the difference in level, the distance the water moves, and the size, shape, and interconnections of the space in the rocks. Because of possible contamination from surface runoff, drinking from the springs is not advised. An excellent opportunity to view springs up close is from an observation deck just east of Cty J, near Riley.

11. Wet Prairie

North of Highway PD is an area of wet prairie and sedge meadow. Among the flowering plants here are:

- Glad mallow, a species which grows only in the midwest. It is threatened in Wisconsin by damage to its habitat and by weed-killing chemicals. It grows three to six feet high and has coarsely-toothed lobe leaves. Its blossoms, in June to August, have white petals about .3 inch long.
- Water hemlock, a poisonous plant that grows 3 to 6 feet tall and has a cluster of small white flowers from May to August.
- Mountain mint, with whitish to rose-pink or purple flowers with small purple spots in late July to mid-September.
- Swamp saxifrage, with rosette-like leaf clusters at its base. In spring it has small flowers, greenish-white, yellowish or purple, with five narrow petals.



Mountain mint

Glade Mallow



12. Riley Game Cooperative



Aldo Leopold

From Cty PD to Klevenville-Riley Road, the trail goes through the area which was the Riley Game Cooperative. Here, the world-famous naturalist Aldo Leopold did some of his research. The cooperative was formed in 1931 by area farmers who were concerned about the uncontrolled hunting on their land; Madison residents who wanted a place to hunt; and Leopold, who wanted a place to study wildlife management. The organization was in full operation by 1933. Its projects included winter feeding stations for game birds, planting, fencing, and raising, banding, and releasing pheasants in the 1,700-acre preserve. The cooperative also provided farmers and city people with an opportunity to socialize.

The land remained privately owned and was open to hunting only by members of the cooperative. Leopold was the cooperative's prime mover. He had seen grazing and erosion destroy the habitat of game birds. With the help of University of Wisconsin students, cooperative members, and groups such as the Boy Scouts, he planted trees and shrubs to provide shelter for pheasants and quail.

Leopold studied the survival rates of quail here, where farmers fed them during the harsh winter of 1936-37. He reported that there was enough fair-weather shelter for game, but more foul-weather shelter was needed; so, he planted red cedar, grapes, viburnum, and mulberry.

Today the most conspicuous sign of the cooperative's work is the cover planting of spruce and pine on a hill to the north of the trail. The cooperative became inactive in the early 1940s. Leopold died in 1948, and the cooperative officially disbanded



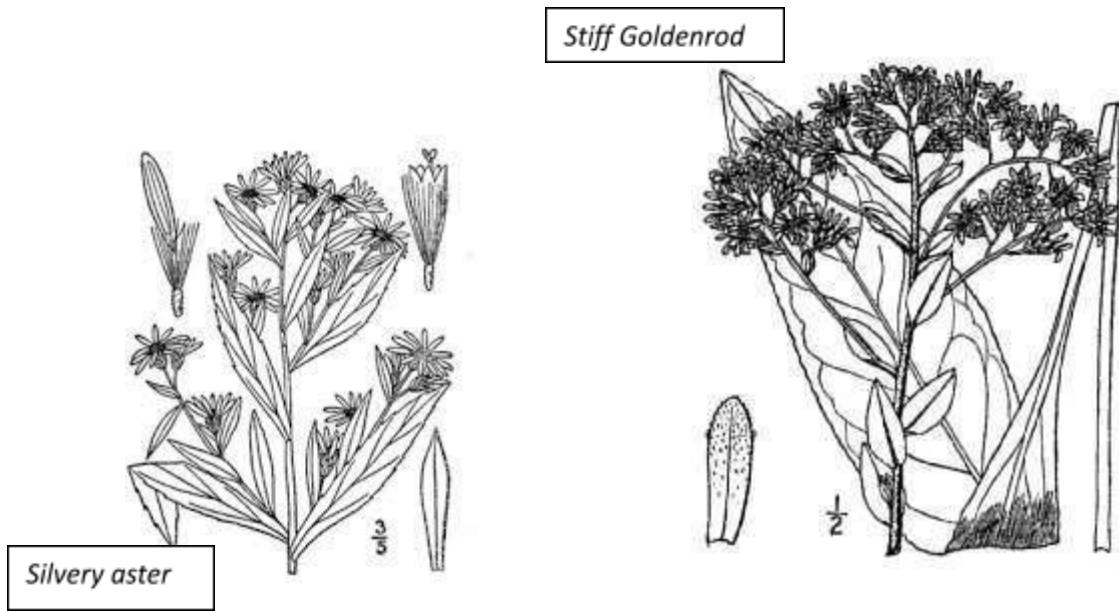
in about 1956. Some of the lowlands of the Riley Game Cooperative have been drained and farmed since then, but other parts of the area still provide habitat for teal, mallard, and wood ducks; geese, pheasants, woodcock, quail, Wilson snipe; horned and short-eared owls; red tailed hawks, redwing blackbirds, and other birds. Beavers, deer, fox, rabbits, squirrels, and muskrats also make homes in this area.

Rueben Paulson, founding farmer of the Riley Game Cooperative, releasing a banded hen pheasant hatched with farm chickens. Photo taken by Aldo Leopold, used with permission of U.W, Department of Wildlife Ecology.

13. Prairie Remnant

Along the trail about .3 mile northwest of Paulson Road is a rich, intact prairie remnant about 50 yards long, with a balance of grasses and broadleaf plants. Look for these plants:

- Jacob's ladder, whose loose clusters of blue, bell-shaped flowers are showy in spring.
- Shooting star
- New Jersey tea. In late June to late July, it has densely-clustered white flowers on long stalks of bushy, woody plant.
- Bottle gentian, which has blue to white bottle-shaped flowers from August to October.
- Gayfeather, a variety of blazingstar.
- Rosinweed
- Golden Alexander, which has flat-topped clusters of small yellow flowers between April and June.
- Rattlesnake master
- Asters
- Goldenrod
- Big bluestem grass
- Bluejoint grass, two to four feet tall, growing in heavy clumps. Its nodes are often swollen.



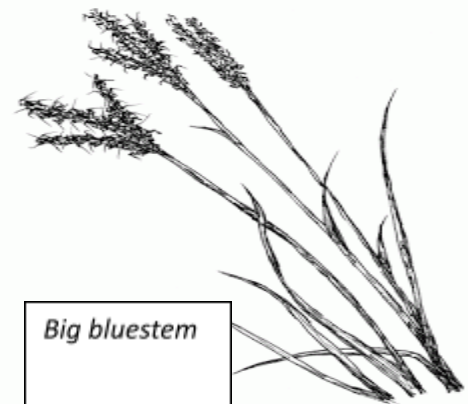
Observation Deck

About one-quarter mile southeast of Cty J, an observation deck affords excellent viewing of several natural springs. The deck was built in 1996 in memory of Verona businessman, Ron Taylor (1929-1995) by his family and friends with whom he shared his love of nature. Ron Taylor had served as the president of the Friends of the Military Ridge State Trail for many years.

14. Riley

The unincorporated community of Riley (elevation 945 feet) was founded in 1881, when the railroad was built. Platted as Sugar River Station on William Riley's farm, it became known as "Riley's Station and Post Office" and has been known as "Riley's" for most of its existence. It was the best-known water stop for the steam engines between Madison and Lancaster. At turn of the century, Riley's had a population of 100 or more, a creamery, stables, a depot, stockyard and a large hall.

In 1943, the Chicago and Northwestern received permission to re-equip. A grocery was the only substantial business near the station. The Commission noted, and no carload freight had been shipped from Riley for four years. The only remaining business today is a tavern, in the building that once was a general store and post office. The tavern features Sunday morning pancake breakfasts. Bluegrass music jams are held on the Saturday afternoon of the month.



Big bluestem

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15. Schalpbach Creek Valley

About one-half mile west of Riley the trail makes its last crossing with the Sugar River. The trail then enters the narrower valley of Schalpbach Creek, which flows into the Sugar River. The uplands in this area are gently rolling, the steeper slopes containing pasture or forest, and the gentler slopes planted primarily with crops such as corn, oats, and hay.

In most of the area, dolomite limestone or sandstone is within 20 inches of the surface of the soil. A 1981 plan for the Upper Sugar River Watershed said that one-third to two-thirds of the topsoil in the area had been lost to erosion. The plan recommended measures such as crop rotation, contour plowing, strip cropping, terracing, grassed waterways, conservation tillage, keeping livestock out of streams, planting of critical areas, and stream bank protection to reduce erosion and improve water quality.

Observation Deck

In 1997, an observation deck was built by the Friends of the Military Ridge State Trail with matching stewardship monies from the Department of Natural Resources where the trail crosses the Sugar River here. The deck area has bike racks and benches so that trail users may rest and enjoy the surroundings. Listen to the frogs (chorus, spring peppers, wood, leopard, green), American toads, and birds (sandhill cranes, high-flying Wilson snipe, and the territorial red-winged blackbirds). Notice the bend in the Sugar River to the northwest of the deck; under these willows, beavers built a dam that was washed out in the floods of 1993.

Ridge Guiders, a group of volunteer naturalists who lead nature walks along the trail from Riley, are working near the deck to restore some of the prairie wetland species that are being crowded out by the reed canary grass and box elders.

16. Sand Pit

In a 1948 Springdale town history, it was reported that "A 300 feet high hillside on the Stanley Ayers farm near Klevenville was scalped of its top covering of sod and soil recently, to provide a mine of sand for the George Pendergast Foundry Co. of Milwaukee. The state geologist indicated that the area probably contained sand suitable for foundry use, and test borings confirmed this."

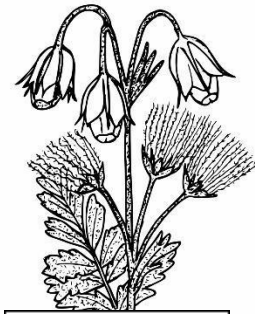
The Chicago and North Western Railroad built a spur for cars beside its tracks at the foot of the hill and the Milwaukee firm moved in its logging equipment. Bulldozers and giant earth movers crawled like ants for two weeks over the steep face of the hill to remove the dirt and rocks, leaving a huge yellow cliff of sand which can be seen for miles.

High-quality sand from here was also shipped to other foundries in the U.S. and Canada. As many as 20 railroad cars plus truck loads were shipped out each week. Operations at the sand pit were discontinued in December of 1980. The pit is privately owned; trail users must keep out. The former quarry's steep cliffs were reduced to safer slopes after the quarry equipment was removed.

17. Prairie Remnant

A prairie remnant extends for about 60 yards on both sides of the trail just east of Klevenville. It ranges from wet prairie to sedge meadow on the north side. Look for these plants:

- Prairie smoke, with purplish-red to pink flowers in late April to May. Long feathery hairs on its seed heads give a “puff of smoke” look. Its stems are low, soft, and hairy, and sprout many deep-cut leaves.
- Prairie dropseed grass, 2 to 3 feet tall. It stands very erect and has long, narrow blades.
- Smooth white lettuce, with pinkish flowers on a spike, clasping elongated leaves and yellow bristles.



Prairie smoke

Killdeer, flickers, red-tailed hawks, and bobolinks are among some of the birds seen in this area.

18. Klevenville

Klevenville (unincorporated) was named for Iver Kleven, an early settler from Norway. A colony from Valdres, Norway settled near a spring between Klevenville and Mount Horeb in 1846 and lived in covered wagons until building a log house. Kleven was a carpenter, contractor, and stone mason; after the railroad came through, he ran a lumber business with two of his sons. He was Klevenville’s postmaster until 1890.

In the 1890s, mail was carried by foot along a grassy trail through heavy woods from Klevenville to Henderson, 2.5 miles to the southeast.

19. Upper Schalpach Creek Valley

Upstream from Klevenville, the 1981 Upper Sugar River Watershed Plan reported that streambank grazing and livestock wastes were destroying water quality. Sediment in streams harms the gills of fish and other animals and covers the rubble in which fish lay their eggs. It also fills the deep holes fish use as rest and escape areas.

In the Schalpach Creek Valley, the railroad was built up from the floodplain and cut through steep hills to keep the uphill grade gentle. The work was done by human and mule power. The trail goes through woods of aspen, oak and maple, with May apples and other wild flowers.

20. Railroad Quarry

North of the trail is a limestone quarry which the railroad used for stone to build this line was built in 1880-81. The quarry has been unused long enough for trees to grow on its steep side.



May apple

21. Limestone Cliffs

You get a closer look at the region's limestone where the railroad cuts through in Mount Horeb, under the Sixth Street bridge. West of the bridge, note the holes in the stone. These are caused by the solvent action of slightly acidic water seeping through the carbonated bedrock—a process that, over many years, forms caves.

22. Mount Horeb

Mount Horeb (population 7,462 and elevation 1,230 feet) was first settled mostly by English people. In the 1870s, Norwegians came in large numbers, bringing with them traditions such as lutefisk (fish preserved in lye) and rosemaling (flower-painted utensils and furnishings). German, Swiss, and Irish influences also can be seen.

Early Mount Horeb was centered near the present Union Cemetery, at the intersection of roads from Black Earth, Verona, Mount Vernon, and Blue Mounds. The coming of the railroad in 1881 spelled the end of the old town. Most of the business places were moved closer to the depot. Dane County Historical Society has marked the site of the “Old Town” along Highway 78.

A variety of 19th-century buildings can be seen in the village, including the three-story Romanesque revival-style Opera House at Main and Second Streets. In 1895, local residents raised \$12,000 to build the opera house. It had shops on the first floor and a stage on the second. Over the years it was the scene of minstrel shows, traveling stock companies, silent movies, and home talent productions. It later served as a lodge hall.

When Highway 18/151 was moved south of the village in 1984, local business people renamed the old highway the “Trollway” to pull visitors to its many craft and antique shops and restaurants. A tourist-visitor information center is open daily from June through August at Main and Third Streets. The Mount Horeb Area Historical Society Museum, at 100 S. Second Street, is open from 12:30 to 4:00 p.m. on weekends from Memorial Day through Labor Day and on special event days.

The trail has a rest area and parking lot between First and Second Streets. The railroad depot was west on First Street.

Stewart County Park is about .5 mile north of the trail on Highway JG. It contains 105 acres of land, including the seven-acre, spring-fed Stewart Lake, picnicking. Two shelters, pavilion, trout fishing, a hiking trail, and a playground. From 1914 to 1920 there was a ski jump on top of the hill at the park entrance. It was considered one of the best in the country, and some of the world's finest jumpers competed there.

Dane County's Prairie Heritage Trail begins about .4 mile south of the Military Ridge Trail on Highway JG. It follows Highway JG eight miles along an open ridge, and then through a small river valley to a second ridge and a 1 1/3-acre restored prairie planted by the Dane County Highway Department.

23. Military Ridge

Between Mount Horeb and Dodgeville, the trail follows the Military Ridge. Geologists call the ridge the Platteville-Galena cuesta. A cuesta is an earth formation in which the rock layers lie parallel to the surface of a long, gentle slope (on the south, sloping six to eight feet per mile to the Illinois border), with a short, steep slope cutting across the layers on the other side (to the north). The ridge parallels the Wisconsin River for more than 60 miles and rises some 500 feet above the Wisconsin River valley.

The Military Ridge is made of alternating layers of dolomite and sandstone. Dolomite is a hard rock formed by the packing and cementing of deposits of broken seashells or mud containing calcium carbonate. After that, the calcium was partially replaced by magnesium. On top of the rock is a cap of loess – a fine soil drifted in by the wind, possibly 20,000 years ago.

There are more streams on the north slope, running in comparatively narrow valleys between wide ranges. The streams to the south have more branches. There are no natural lakes on either slope, and no wetlands except along the Wisconsin River. Between Mount Horeb and Blue Mounds is a three-directional divide from which water flows north to the Wisconsin River, southeast to the Sugar River, and southwest to the Pecatonica River.

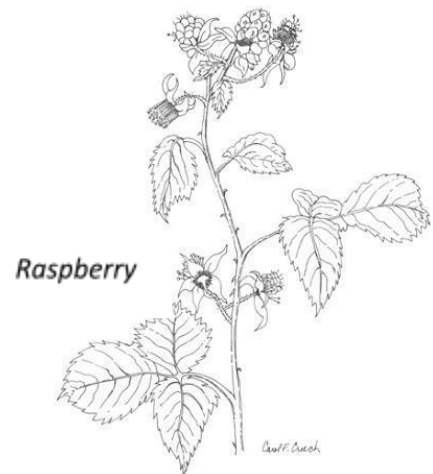
24. The Blue Mounds

East and West Blue Mounds are stubborn leftovers from the gradual erosion of the surrounding area. They rise 300 to 500 feet above the Military Ridge divide. The mounds are separated by steep north-flowing tributaries of the Blue Mounds Creek.

The west mound has a smaller, higher summit. It has an 85-foot layer of erosion-resistant dolomite (created some 405 to 425 million years ago by the last sea that covered Wisconsin) to protect the older Maquoketa Shale below. The dolomite is the same rock as is found in Niagara Falls.

Winnebagos called the West Mound “Weehaukaja,” meaning “a high place with a wonderful view.” The Sauks believed the mound was the home of the nature spirit, Manotou, who gave off rumbling sounds, and the spring on the eastern slope was believed sacred to the Manotou. The mounds, called “Smokey Mountains” on early maps, were a rallying ground for Native Americans. They said the blue haze around the mounds was smoke from Wakanda, the earth maker. The mounds were covered with tree when whites forest saw them, probably because the rocks kept prairie fires away.

In 1830, Henry R Schoolcraft wrote “The highest elevations ...and the Blue Mound, are covered with soil and with trees...I have never, either in the west or our of the west, seen a richer soil, or more stately fields of corn and oats, than upon one of the plateau of the Blue Mound.” Today, dogwood wild plum, hazelnut, elderberry, sumac, wild grape, and raspberry bushes and trees grow in the area.



25. Little Norway

26. Cave of the Mounds

The Military Ridge Trail tunnels under Highway ID near West Blue Mound. The tunnel replaced a 101-foot long steel bridge that was built in 1935, when Highway 18/151 followed this route. The corner of the Cave of the Mounds Road and Highway ID is over the tunnel. You can get to it by the exit from the trail to Highway ID across from Highway JG.

Cave of the Mounds, north on Cave of the Mounds Road, is in rock formed more 400 million years ago by the shells of small animals which settled into a million rock layers when this part of was a sea. The cavern was formed about a million years ago by water seeping down through the shale in the Blue Mounds area and rushing as an underground stream. The cave was discovered on August 4, 1939, after the dust settled from a 1,600-pound dynamite blast set off in a quarry.

It is privately owned and open year-round for a fee. The cave had 18 rooms and holds more than 100 people. Inside, the temperature remains a constant 50° F. Rock formations include stalagmites, stalactites (streaked in red and black by iron oxide and manganese in the soil), helictites (rare, twisting, curving shapes), oolites (cave pearls, formed by lime around sand grains), and fossils. Mushrooms, mosses, and algae grow in the cave.

The grounds have picnic areas, rock gardens, and trails.

Brigham County Park

Brigham County Park is on the top of East Blue Mound, 1.25 miles north from the trail on Highway F. From the east, the most direct way to the park is via Highway ID and Cave of the Mounds Road to Highway F.

The park was named for Ebenezer Brigham, one of the first settlers in the area in 1828. The nearest other settler was in Dodgeville, and there were no others between him and Milwaukee. Brigham had the largest of many lead diggings in the town. He had a large garden and a number of cows, entertained travelers, acted as justice of the peace and postmaster, and was one of the first members of the Wisconsin Territorial Legislature.

Brigham Park has 88 acres of woods and a great view to the north and west from atop the mound (elevation of 1490 feet). There are 25 campsites, a group camp area, picnicking, two shelters, a self-guided nature trail, and a playground.

27. Village of Blue Mounds

Blue Mounds (population 880, elevation 1301 feet) has a community park on the west edge of the village which borders the Military Ridge State Trail and provides parking, water and restrooms (seasonal) to visitors.

During the Blackhawk War, a fort was erected southwest of the present intersection of Highway 18/151 and County F to protect the area's 25 miners. The fort had four block houses

ten feet high, with two walls that jutted out so Native Americans couldn't climb them. It was garrisoned by General Henry Dodge's Iowa-Michigan Brigade from May 20 to September 20, 1832. The fort also served as a stopover for travelers.

The first Norwegian settlers came in 1846. Their houses were small and simple. Many dug out the sides of the hill, with posts as a front wall in which they made a door and one or two windows. Pulitzer prize-winner Hamlin Garland found characters in Blue Mounds for many of his novels.

At Blue Mounds, the Military Ridge Trail crosses the Wisconsin Bikeway, which links with the LaCrosse and the Mukwonago. The Bikeway follows County F to the north and County Z to the south.

28. Pokerville

About .2 miles west of Mounds Road, the trail passes between the stone abutments of a long-abandoned bridge. Maps from 1876 to 1930 show a north-south road here. By 1952 it had disappeared. The road led downhill to the West Blue Mounds Post Office, more commonly known as Pokerville. This ghost town was founded as Moundville in 1828 by a professional gambler. It got the name Pokerville because of the extensive gambling that went on there. Drinking, fighting, and even murders also took place there.

On November 16, 1850, the Milwaukee Journal reported: "Murder: the stage driver says, a man was killed at the Pokerville on Blue Mounds a week ago last Wednesday night. He stopped overnight and was in the saloon watching a game of cards when a row broke out, and he was shot by the bartender who had fired at 'Slippery Dick,' a fellow who is always around this part of the country gambling."

Pokerville had more than 50 buildings, including two saloons, three hotels, and several general stores, and a race track atop the West Blue Mound (the oval is now a drive in the state park). In the 1840s, Pokerville had a reputation for cheaper food and booze than at Brigham. German and Norwegian farmers began to move into the area in the 1840s, but well into the 1850s the village's main distinction was as a gambling place.

Pokerville lost people to the California Gold Rush and the Civil War. By the 1870s, Pokerville's days as a gambling town were over, but it still had three saloons, legal or illegal. The Moundville Union Temperance League, advocating total abstinence, had 50 members in 1879. When the railroad went a quarter mile to the north, many of the houses and stores were moved to a new town. Lost River Cave is near the Pokerville site, however, the cave is no longer open to the public.



29. Blue Mounds State Park

West of Mounds Road, the trail runs along the south border of Blue Mound State Park, where there is a park entrance along the trail for users. The park includes the flat top of West Blue Mound (elevation 1,716 feet), the highest point in southern Wisconsin. The park had two

observation towers from which, on a clear day, you can see the State Capitol, the Baraboo and Wisconsin River bluffs, and the Belmont and Platteville Mounds. The Baraboo Range, some 20 miles to the north, is a quartzite ridge stretching 25 miles east to west. It rises 500 to 800 feet above the surrounding plain and is among the oldest visible physical features on earth.

The park has restrooms, a swimming pool, concession, picnicking, shelters, wooded campsites, mountain bike trails, and hiking and cross-country skiing trails. There is an entrance off the bike trail into the park and special campsites for bicyclists. The Blue Mound State Park nature trail has labels describing many of the plants, animals, and geological features of the park. The park is home to deer, many other mammals, and at least 75 kinds of birds. Another 50-60 kinds of birds come through in spring and fall.

30. Tornado path

As you approach Barneveld, you can see the path taken by the destructive tornado which roared through the village on June 8, 1984. The tornado, one of the worst in history, carried belongings across the trail and many miles beyond. It left a notch in the skyline of trees north of the trail.

From here, you can also see a large stone and sand quarry near Barneveld. The limestone is used for building roads and highways and for agricultural lime. The quarry opened in the 1930s. A cave was found there, but was filled in because it was unsafe.

31. Barneveld

In 1985, Barneveld (population 1,231, elevation 1,235 feet) completed reconstruction after the 1984 tornado, whose winds of more than 260 miles per hour destroyed all but one of the village's businesses and 60 percent of its housing. The storm caused \$22 million in damages, killed nine people, and injured more than 200 people. A part of the reconstruction was a village park, with a shelter, toilets, volleyball, and basketball courts, horseshoes, and parking.

Barneveld was born when David Simpson offered the railroad right-of-way through his farm for \$1 if it would build a depot there. He subdivided and began selling lots. It originally was called Simpsonville, but renamed Barneveld by a railroad surveyor who was from the Netherlands. Most of the early settlers were from the British Isles.

County highways K and HH lead north out of Barneveld along Hogback Ridge, which was used by soldiers during the Blackhawk War to get to the Wisconsin River. For many years, this route was an important link between the lead region and the railroad that went along the Wisconsin River.

Birch Lake Park, is northwest of the village on County T. It has picnicking, camping, boating, and fishing for bluegills, largemouth bass, and black bullheads.

A state fish and wildlife refuge is along Trout Creek, Iowa County's best trout stream, about 3.5 miles northwest of the trail on County T. Brown trout reproduce naturally here.

Between Barneveld and Ridgeway, a stone barn built in 1881 by three stone masons from Wales is visible to the south along Highway 18/151. The barn was built with quarried stone and has a gable roof with two dormers over the main entrances.

32. Jennieton

Jennieton is another town that withered when the railroad passed it by. It stood along the old Highway 18/151 near where County Highway T goes to the south.

Jennieton was settled by Welsh Congregationalists and Baptists.

Jennieton had churches. A cheese factory, a school, a saloon, a hotel, a post office, wagon and carpenter shops, boot and shoe store, grocery and dry goods store with a hall upstairs that was used by various groups, a blacksmith, a literary society which held lectures every two weeks, and a Good Templars Lodge.

In April 1871, Jennieton young women organized the Ginsto Society, which passed a resolution "...That any fashion which either produces a personal injury, wastes our time, or doverts our minds from high and noble pursuits, is wrong in itself and should be resisted as tyrannical...That woman, equally with man, is a distinct person, a self-conscious being, a moral agent, a living soul, an individual of the human race...so, notwithstanding her sex, she has a capacity of self-government, and as sex cannot enter as a constituent element into her personality; it shall not be permitted to regulate the activities, and to decide what shall be the sphere in which such personality shall evert itself... That woman has talent, and a natural inclination for a much wider sphere of action than is allotted to her; and... That the members of this society will not regard the laws of custom in this particular, but will pursue any occupation, trade, or employment which is honorable and to which they had a natural inclination." This was 50 years before the US Constitution was amended to allow women to vote.

When the railroad was being built, Jennieton residents complained that the railroad workers drank, fought, and stole their money. In 1881, quite a bit of the stock was killed by trains until farmers learned to fence their cattle.

Turkey vultures pass this way in their April migration northward.

33. High Crossing

The intersection of Pikes Peak Road, the railroad tracks, and the highway was known as "High Crossing."

In 1907, the Wisconsin Railroad Commission ordered the Chicago and Northwestern to put an underground crossing here within 40 days. The ends of the railroad overpass can still be seen, but the bridge has been removed.

You can see Welsh writing on many of the stones in the Jennieton cemeteries, which are north of the trail on Pikes Peak and Oak roads.

34. Ridgeway

Ridgeway (population 653, elevation 1,170 feet) was settled by J.B. Skinner and the other miners in 1828. Irish and Welsh settled in the 1840s, large numbers of Welsh came in about 1850, and Norwegians and Germans in about 1855.

On July 24, 1910, just months after a 64-22 referendum vote against fire protection, a fire destroyed half of Ridgeway's business district. Men, women, and children fought the fire. Three years later, still without a village fire department, 17 buildings were burned. A fire department was later established after these disasters.

Ridgeway has the only railroad depot left along the Military Ridge Trail. The depot was built in September 1913 and is the mid-sized style of depot designed by the Chicago and North Western in 1900. Similar stations were built in Wyeville, South Beaver Dam, Grand Marsh, Sussex, Mercer, and Bellevue, Wisconsin, as well as communities in Iowa and Illinois.

The depot's floor plan showed a ticket office near the center, with windows through which the station staff could see trains coming from either direction. The passenger waiting room was at one end, the larger freight room at the other end, and a small register room between the freight room and the ticket office. The depot was sold in 1976 to a local business.

The Ridge Hotel dates back to 1841, when it was a stage stop on the Military Road. The village switchboard was there until dial phones came through. The 23-room hotel was rehabilitated in 1976 for use as a home and a recreation center.

A toilet building is south of the trail to serve both the trail and the village park users, and includes water. Because Highway 18/151 took the railroad right-of-way west of Ridgeway, the trail was built along its north side. It has more hills and curves than the railroad grade. Bike carefully.

The cemetery and site of the old St. Bridget's Church, Ridgeway's first Catholic church, can be seen south of the trail about a mile southwest of Ridgeway.

35. Frogtown and Wakefield

A mining settlement near County BB and the Military Ridge was known as Frogtown. Some of the lead ore was found just below the sod in this area. In deeper mines, water was a problem. Sometimes it was pumped out; here miners had a boat that went underground from the north side of the road to the south side. Burrell Jones of Ridgeway said his aunt used the boat to take dinner to her miner father. Holes and piles of earth north of the trail are present day reminders of the mines.

To the south was a settlement known as Wakefield. The former Wakefield School, a mile south on County BB, was built in 1893 after an earlier one, a half mile to the north, was condemned. The second school is now part of Folklore Village, a center for arts, crafts, folk music and dancing, festivals, workshops, and ethnic foods. Folklore Village offers many educational classes, environmental restoration projects, as well as a youth hostel and tent camping.

The Wakefield mine was on the same 40 acres as the school, and both the Frogtown and Wakefield mines employed several hundred people. Many different stories are told about a ghost which haunted this area from 1840 until about 1881, when the trains scared it away, or 1910, when the spirit burned in the Ridgeway fire. Maybe it is still hiding in the Chimney of the old school...

36. Military Ridge Historic Marker

Here, a marker commemorates the history of the Military Ridge. The marker only has room to list some of the type of travelers seen by Herbert Quick, on his 1855 journey. He also wrote of "...land-hunters, merchants, criminals escaping from justice, couples fleeing from the law, families seeking homes, the wrecks of homes seeking secrecy, gold-seekers bearing southwest to the Overland Trail, politicians looking for places in which to win fame and fortune, editors hunting opportunities for founding newspapers, adventurers on their way to everywhere, lawyers with a few books, abolitionists going to the Border War, innocent-looking outfits carrying fugitive slaves, and most numerous of all, home-seekers hunting country."

On a clear day, you can see the Belmont Mound, more than 20 miles to the southwest. You also have a panoramic view of the Iowa County farms, about 90 percent of which are dairy farms. Most of the rest of the farms raise beef cattle, corn, oats, hay, or pigs.

37. Governor Dodge State Park

Governor Dodge, with 5,029 acres, is Wisconsin's second largest state park (second to Devil's Lake). It has swimming, boating, and fishing on two man-made lakes (96-acre Cox Hollow Lake, and 137-acre Twin Valley Lake). There are 40 miles of trails for hiking, horseback riding, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing. A naturalist leads nature walks on these trails in the summer. The park's bike trails are open from May 1 to November 15. Trail passes are required to ride on the park's bike trails, and trail maps are available at the park office.

There are picnic grounds and 267 campsites, some of them are open year-round. Live entertainment- folk music, dancing, story-telling, and "Symphony of the Hills" concerts -is offered in the park.

Governor Dodge's terrain is varied and so are its plants and animals. The forests are mainly comprised of oak and hickory, with dozens of other trees mixed in. There is a relic stand of red, white, and jack pines as well. Spring wildflowers include bloodroot, hepatica, and Dutchman's breeches. The damp, shaded, rich soil produces a favorable habitat for many ferns. There are some prairie remnants, and rare plants found in isolated areas of the park.

Mammals range from the tiniest shrew, to the white-tailed deer. Red fox, racoons, and woodchucks are commonly seen. There are several kinds of non-poisonous snakes, a few turtles, many frogs and toads, and thousands of kinds of insects, spiders, and other small animals.

An entrance to the Governor Dodge State Park for trail users is about 2.3 miles east of Dodgeville. The paved access parallels Highway Z and then leads hikers and bikers to the Cox Hollow beach and picnic area. There is a concession stand with refreshments at the area.

A separate access is provided for snowmobilers during the winter months. This allows snowmobilers to ride the scenic 15-mile loop trail and return to the Military Ridge.

38. Dodgeville

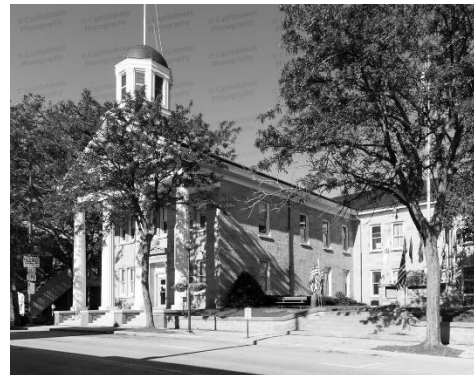
The Military Ridge Trail ends and begins at Highway 23 north of Dodgeville. There is a 40-car parking lot about .2 miles east of 23 on County YZ, where the Department of Natural Resources owns five acres of land.

Dodgeville (population 4,693, elevation 1,253 feet) began soon after the coming of miners and prospectors in 1827. Most notable was Col. Henry Dodge, who came with his family and four black slaves on October 3, 1827. Dodge made friends with the Winnebagoes and gave them several hundred dollars' worth of provisions and merchandise in exchange for rights to mine on their land. By January, Dodge's party had mined more than \$3,000 worth of lead.

Others heard about Dodge's success and came to mine on Native American land, most without buying the right to do so. Winnebago Chief Carumna complained to the Indian agent at Prairie du Chien, who ordered the miners off the Native American land. But he found about 130 miners, armed with rifles and pistols. Since there were only 130 men fit for duty at Fort Crawford, the U.S. government decided instead to negotiate to buy land from the Native Americans. Dodge was a signer of the 1829 treaty. He later became the first territorial governor, a congressman, and a U.S. Senator.

A visitor described Dodgeville in 1833 as "a cluster of eight to ten log cabins, with diggings and a furnace, and one little variety store in a log cabin. These constituted the town and this was mostly the property of Col. Dodge."

The Iowa County Courthouse, built in 1859-61 of limestone quarried north of Dodgeville, is the oldest courthouse in Wisconsin still in use. The Greek Revival design was by architect Ernest Wiesen of Mineral Point. The cupola housed a bell used to signal the opening of County Board meetings and Independence Day celebrations. Additions were built in 1894 and 1927, and the columns, pediment, and cupola were replaced in their original style in 1937.



Iowa County Court House

Other historic structures in Dodgeville include an old log blacksmith shop, an old hotel, and many stores, interspersed among modern buildings.

The lead smelters left a waste called slag, which tests showed to still contain considerable amounts of lead. In 1876, the state's only slag furnace was built in Dodgeville to fuse the slag. It is no longer used, but still stands on East Spring Street, marked by a plaque.